

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 SS-15 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2340

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 2720

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, CM
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS-COUNTRY EVALUATION PLANS(CEP)

REF: STATE 139160

1. SUMMARY. WHILE POST WELCOMES EFFORT TO MAKE MORE
PRECISE OUR CONCERNS OVER HUMAN RIGHTS, IT IS FELT THAT OVER-
RELIANCE ON SET MODEL MAY LEAD TO CONFIRMATIONAL SITUATION WHILE
OBVIOUS NEED IS TO FIND MEANS TO ENCOURAGE DIALOGUE. LOCAL
OFFICIALS HAVE RECENTLY EXPRESSED THEIR OPINIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS,
BUT HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT FRAGILITY OF OAU MAKES IT UNLIKELY
THAT CAMEROON WILL TAKE PUBLIC STANCE AGAINST OTHER OAU MEMBER
GUILTY OF CONSISTENT PATTERN OF VIOLATION HUMAN RIGHTS. END
SUMMARY.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT I BE AUTHORIZED ON RECEIPT OF
DRAFT REPORT TO DISCUSS SUBJECT WITH APPROPRIATE GURC OFFICIAL
IN ORDER ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN PURPOSE OF CEP, ESTABLISH SOME
COMMONLY AGREED DATA BASE AND IDENTIFY LEGITIMATE OBJECTIVES.

3. MATTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF VITAL CONCERN TO GURC. SECRETARY
GENERAL MINISTRY FOREIGN AFFAIRS JOSEPH OWONO (FORMER AMBASSADOR
US AND NUMBER OTHER COUNTRIES) ENGAGED IN LONG DISCUSSION ON
SUBJECT JUNE 15. HE INDICATED GURC OFFICIALS DISMAYED AT EVENTS
GUINEA, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, UGANDA AND ETHIOPIA. HE HAD PERSONALLY
LOST SEVERAL GOOD FRIENDS TO SEKOU TOURE'S REIGN OF TERROR. HOWEVER,
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DE ASID THAT OAU WAS ALL AFRICAN STATES HAD IN TERMS OF COLLECTIVE
BODY TO REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS. OAU WAS SO FRAGILE THAT ANY
ATTEMPT TO EXAMINE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN OAU WOULD BE
CONTRARY NON-INTERFERENCE DOCTRINE AND LEAD TO FURTHER WEAKENING
OF ORGANIZATION. WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT AFRICAN COUNTRIES COULD
SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS EFFORTS IN OTHER FORA, SUCH AS GENEVA UNCHR,
PARTICULARLY WHEN IT CAME TO INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS,

OWONO COUNTERED THAT PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF OAU SO DEEPLY ENGRAINED THAT HE PERSONALLY COULD NOT SEE PRESIDENT AHIDJO ISSUING STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF ANY INVESTIGATION HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OTHER AFRICAN STATES.

4. ON JUNE 23 RETIRED FSO ROBERT FOULON SPENT TWO HOURS IN CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT AHIDJO DURING BRIEF PRIVATE VISIT TO CAMEROON. FOULON HAS KNOWN AHIDJO ON PERSONAL BASIS SINCE HE OPENED THIS POST IN 1957. WHEN PRESIDENT WAS ASKED ABOUT HIS RELATIONS WITH AMERICANS, HE EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY ALTHOUGH HEARTILY AGREEING WITH ITS BASIC PRINCIPLES AND ITS EFFECT IN PUTTING RUSSIANS ON DEFENSIVE IN AFRICA AND GENERALLY. IN RAMBLING COURSE GENERALLY PERSONAL EXCHANGE TWO MAIN POINTS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY WHICH EMERGED ACCORDING TO FOULON WERE: (A) DIFFICULTY IN APPLYING SAME STANDARDS TO COUNTRIES WITH DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS AND AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT AND EVOLUTION (EXAMPLES CITED BY PRESIDENT WERE US, BRAZIL, CAMEROON AND AUSTRALIA) AND (B) DIFFICULTY EUROPEANS AND AMERICAN HAVE IN GRASPING FACT AFRICAN SINGLE PARTY REGIMES NECESSITATED BY NEED DEVELOP NATIONAL UNITY AND OVERCOME TRIBAL DIVISIONS. ON LATTER POINT AHIDJO STRESSED THAT MOST IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES IN AFRICA HAVE BASIS IN TRIBAL OR REGIONAL RIVALRIES AND HE CITED CASES OF CAMEROON AND ZAMBIA AS EXAMPLES WHERE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP WAS FORCED TO IMPOSE SINGLE PARTY CONTROL
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DESPITE BASIC DEMOCRATIC CONVICTIONS OF THE LEADERS.

5. COMMENT: IT IS ASSUMED THAT AT SOME POINT EITHER CEP'S THEMSELVES OR FACT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DONE WILL BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE. THEREFORE, FOLLOWING A POLICY OF OPENNESS, WE SHOULD PROCEED ON THAT BASIS AND BE WILLING TO DISCUSS OPENLY SUBJECT WITH HOST GOVERNMENT. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THERE A PSYCHOLOGICAL OR ETHNOCENTRIC PROBLEM HERE WHICH MUST BE HANDLED WITH GREAT TACT OR ELSE COOPERATION OF HOST GOVERNMENT IN ACHIEVING ANY MEANINGFUL RESULTS CEP WILL BE DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE OBTAIN. IN THIS CONNECTION, THERE TWO TYPES OF SENSITIVITIES: (1) UNWILLINGNESS TAKE PUBLIC STANCE AGAINST BROTHER AFRICAN COUNTRY AND (2) RELUCTANCE HAVE OWN HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD JUDGED ON SAME STANDARD AS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. I WOULD THEREFORE PROPOSE ON RECEIPT OF CEP THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH OWONO OR OTHER SUITABLE GURC OFFICIAL (EBOUA, BELLO OR MBAYA, SENGAT KUO AT PRESIDENCY) IN ORDER THAT HOST GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE SOME IDEA AS TO PURPOSE OF EXERCISE AND ATTEMPT SECURE GURC COOPERATION. BELIEVE, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, OUR FIRST OBJECTIVE, WHETHER IT TAKE THREE, SIX, TWELVE MONTHS OR LONGER, IS TO EDUCATE HOST GOVERNMENT ON ACCEPTED VIEW THAT CONSISTANT PATTERN OF VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

IS UNACCEPTABLE AND TRANSCENDS CONSIDERATIONS OF INTERFERENCE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, WHETHER IT OCCUR IN DEVELOPED, UNDEVELOPED, OAU OR WHITE RULED SOUTHERN AFRICAN STATE. WHILE I HAVE CERTAIN RESERVATIONS ABOUT APPROACHING GURC IN THIS EXERCISE, I BELIEVE CONSEQUENCES OF DEVELOPING CEP WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND POSSIBILITY OF PARTICIPATION WILL LEAD TO GREATER PROBLEMS. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT ONLY THROUGH DIALOGUE CAN CEP'S BE DRAWN UP WHICH HAVE SOME CHANCE OF BEING ACCEPTED BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT. WITHOUT COOPERATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES, CEP MAY BRING ABOUT SITUATION WHICH WILL ONLY COMPLICATE OUR RELATIONS IN OTHER AREAS AND NOT HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

6. FINALLY, I AM CONCERNED AT ANY HINT OF MORAL SUPERIORITY WHICH COULD BE INFERRED FROM THIS EXERCISE. THEREFORE, ANY
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INFO ON FREEDOM HOUSE CLASSIFICATION OF CAMEROON AS NOT FREE (SEE IO TO MS. DERIAN OF 5/18) AND A COPY OF CEP PREPARED FOR UNITED STATES WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL.

7. DEPT PLEASE COPY OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED.
MITHOEFER

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Message Attributes

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